

THE HOME OF SHAKSPERE.

(Concluded from page 271.)

PASSING from all unpleasant reminiscences of Shakespere's residence at Stratford, let us take a quiet walk by the field-path that leads to ANNE HATHAWAY'S COTTAGE. By this footway the poet must have often wandered in the evening to his "lady-love." It is a pleasant walk—a short mile from Stratford. Quiet and luxuriant is the landscape which meets the eye all around—corn-fields and pasture-land and snug farms; the quiet, old-fashioned gables of Shottery before; the wood-embosomed houses of Stratford behind,

where from among the trees shoots up the elegant spire of one of the most beautiful of our country churches. Shottery abounds with old half-timbered houses; and one, now a little roadside inn called "The Shakespere," is a capital example, and stands beside the field-path at the commencement of the lane leading to Anne's house. Proceeding down this lane, we cross a brook—a few yards farther, and we reach the house, a view of which is here given as seen from the garden. It is a long thatched tenement of



timber and plaster, substantially built upon a foundation of squared slabs of *lias shale*, which is a characteristic of the Warwickshire cottages, and is seen in Shakespere's birthplace, as already noted. On looking up at the central chimney, the spectator may be startled at the date which is here engraved. It is cut on stone, and let into



the bricks, and simply records the reparation of the house by John Hathaway, who appears to have done much for its comforts, as we shall see. But the house itself has come in for a share of the doubts which have succeeded the credulity of past times, and it has been declared not to be

Anne's father's. Mr. Knight has sifted the evidence, and triumphantly disproved the doubt. John Hathaway held property at Shottery in 1543. Richard Hathaway, the father of Anne, was intimate with Shakespere's father, for the latter stood as his bondman in an action at law dated 1576. There is no doubt that the Hathaways held the house here long before—the *purchase* was, however, only effected in 1606. That Anne should be described as "of Stratford" in the marriage bond, is not singular: Shottery is but a hamlet of the parish of Stratford.

This house, like Shakespere's birthplace, is subdivided into three tenements. By referring to our engraving of the exterior from the garden, this will be most clearly understood. The square, compact and taller half of the building to the reader's left forms one house. The other two are divided by the passage, which runs entirely through the lower half, from the door in front (to which the steps lead) to that seen close to the railings in our back view. This passage serves for both tenements. That to the right on entering consists of one large room below, with

a chimney extending the whole width of the house, with an oven and boiler, showing that this was the principal kitchen when the house was all

in one. The door to the left leads into the parlor, which is here engraved. It is a large, low-roofed room, ceiled with strong beams of timber, and

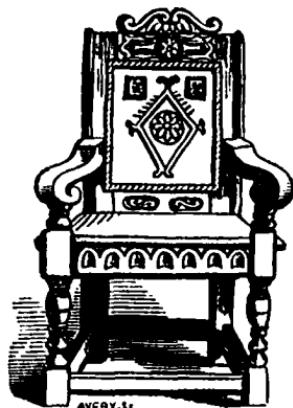


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much resembling the kitchen of Shakspere's birthplace. A "bacon cupboard" of similar construction is also on the left side of the fire-place, upon the transverse bar of which is cut "I H. E H. J B 1697," the initials of John Hathaway, his wife Anne, and, it may be, the maker of the door, which has been cut ornamentally. The first two initials and the date are the same as upon the large chimney, which belongs to this room, and which has been already noticed. Upon an old table beneath the window, "M·H" is carved, all indicative of the proprietors.

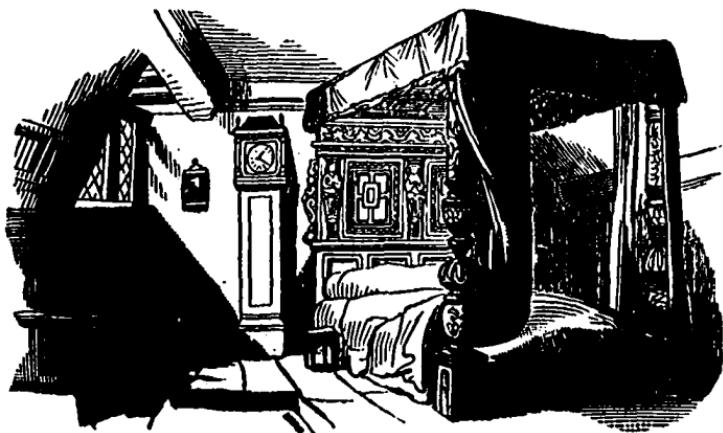
Ireland, in 1792, purchased an old oak chair, which he has engraved in his *Picturesque Views on the Avon*, and which is here copied. He says it was called "Shakspere's courting chair." With a similar desire to please relic-lovers to that which has been already shown to have once existed in Shakspere's birthplace concerning the chair there, this chair, although long since gone, has a successor dignified by the same name, in an old settle in the passage through the house, and which has but one old bit of wood, the seat, in it. It is but fair to add, that those who are skeptical are not met by bold assertions of its genuineness, although there be no denial of its

possible claim to that quality; but all credulous and believing persons are allowed the full benefit of their faith.



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The bed-room over the parlor, engraved below, is ascended by a ladder-like stair; and here stands an old carved bedstead, certainly as old as the Shaksperian era. Whither there in Anne's



time, or brought thero since, it is ancient enough for her or her family to have slept in, and adds an interest to the quaint bed-room in the roof.

The back view of the house, here given, is more picturesque than the front one. The ground rises from the road to a level with the back-door.



Tall trees overshadow it, and a rustic stile beside them leads into a meadow, where stand some cottages as old as the home of the Hathaways. There is much to interest the student-lover of the old rural life of England in Shottery.

From the period of Shakspere's marriage to that of his retirement from London, there is nothing to connect him with Stratford and its neighborhood. We must look elsewhere. With the natural love of a true-hearted man, we find that he made his native town the home he visited whenever he had the opportunity, and chose for his place of retirement when the busy metropolitan duties he had fulfilled ensured him competence, NEW PLACE, the house he had purchased at the early age of thirty-three; he died at that of fifty-two. "He was wont to go to his native country once a year," says Aubrey; and he had so intimately connected himself with Stratford that he looked towards it as his resting-place. New Place, we are informed by Dugdale, was originally erected by Sir Hugh Clopton, temp. Henry VII. It was, he says, "a fair house, built of brick and timber." It was sold to the Under-

hill family, and was purchased from them by Shakspere in 1597, who having repaired and modeled it to his own mind, changed the name to New Place, which it retained until its demolition.

There are no views of the house as it was in Shakspere's time. The view engraved so frequently is an imposition. Malone first published it "from an ancient survey," in which it is not stated to represent New Place, or any other place in particular. He ordered the discoverer of this survey, Mr. Jordan, of Stratford, to add the arms of Shakspere over the door, because "they were likely to have been there!" and to add "neat wooden pales" in front. To which liberal direction Jordan added the porch! and so originated this authentic picture. A view of New Place, as altered by Sir Hugh Clopton, and as it appeared previous to its demolition, may be seen in Mr. R. B. Wheeler's "History of Stratford-on-Avon." Not a feature of the ancient Shakspelian residence had then been suffered to remain.

In the garden of Mr. Hunt, to whose family Mrs. Gastrell sold the site of New Place in 1775, are two fragments of the house. One is a stone



lintel, the other a portion of sculpture, in stone also, which may have been placed over a door. It is ornamented with a shield, but the bearings cannot now be distinguished, owing to decay. On each side are groups of flowers, also much injured by time.

There is another and apparently genuine relic of New Place at present in the possession of the Court family, who own Shakspere's house. It is a square of glass, measuring nine inches by seven, in which a circular piece is leaded, having the letters "W. A. S." for William and Ann Shak-

spero, tied in "a true lover's knot," and the date, 1615, the year before the poet's death, beneath.



A relative of the late Mrs. Court, whose ancestor had been employed to pull down New Place, had saved this square of glass, but attached little value to it. He gave it to her, but she had an honest dislike to the many pretenders to relics, and never showed this glass unless it was expressly requested by the few who had heard of it. She told her story simply, made no comments and urged no belief. The letters and figures are certainly characteristic; they are painted in dark brown outline, tinted with yellow. The border is also yellow. The lead is decayed, and the glass loose. It altogether appears to be as genuine a relic as any that have been offered. It has not been engraved before.

We have now but to visit the TOMB OF SHAKESPEARE in the chancel of the beautiful church of Stratford. It is placed against a blank window,



on the left of the spectator as he faces the altar. How soon it was erected after the poet's death we cannot confidently say, but that it was before 1623 we can ascertain from Leonard Digges' versae prefixed to the first edition of the poet's works. A half-length figure of him is placed in a niche; above is his arms, on each side of which are seated cherubs, one holding an inverted torch with a skull beside him, the other a spade: on the apex above is another skull. Beneath the cushion on which the poet is writing, is inscribed:

JUDICIO PYLIVM, GENIO SOCRATEM ARTE
MAONEM,
TERRA TEGIT POPVLVS MÆRET, OLYMPVS
HABET.

STAT, PASSENGER; WHY GOEST THOU BY SO FAST?
READ, IF THOU CANST, WHOM ENVOYS DEATH HATH PLAST
WTHIN THIS MONVMENT: SHAKSPERE, WITH WHOME
QUICK NAYVRE DIDE; WHOSE NAME DOH DECK YB. TOMB
FAR MORE THEN COST; SITH ALL YC. HE HATH WRITT
LEAVES LIVING ART BVT PAGE TO SERVE HIS WITT.

Obiit. Ano. Doi. 1616.
Altare 63. Die 33. Ap.

The half-length effigy of Shakspere was originally painted after nature. The eyes were a light hazel; the hair and beard auburn. The dress was a scarlet doublet slashed on the breast, over which was a loose black gown without sleeves. The upper part of the cushion was crimson, the lower green; the cord which bound it and the tassels were gilt. John Ward, grandfather of the Kembles, caused the tomb to be repaired and the original colors restored in 1748, from the profits of the performance of *Othello*. In 1793, Malone, in an evil hour, gained permission to paint it white; and also the effigy of Shakspere's friend, John Combe, who lies beside the altar. Mr. Knight has most justly stigmatized this act as one of "unscrupulous insolence." Certainly Malone was at much pains to write himself down an ass.

We learn from Dugdale's correspondence that the sculptor of this monument was Gerard Johnson. His work has been subjected to much criticism, particularly by such as are anxious to have Shakspere not only a great poet, but a handsome man. It is a curious fact that Martin Droeshout's portrait prefixed to the folio of 1623, and beneath which Ben Jonson has affixed verses attesting its accuracy, and which all his "fellows" who aided in this edition, as well as others who knew and loved the man could also confirm, bears a decided similarity to this bust. All agree in one striking feature—the noble forehead and quiet, unostentatious, kindly expression of feature which must have belonged to "the gentle Shakspere." These early artists appear to have been literal copyists, and the bust at Stratford is the best, and, I incline to think, the only authority to be depended on. It was probably cut from a cast taken after death; and it is remarkable that it stands a good test phrenologically, as if it had been adapted to the poet—a singular instance of its truth. Another corroborative proof exists in what has been objected to as inaccurate, the length of the upper lip; but Sir Walter Scott, whose intellect most nearly approached the poet, had the same feature and the same commanding head. The features are regular, nay, handsome

and intelligent. The lower part of the face, though inclined to be fleshy, does not injure the features, which are all delicately formed; and the side-view of the head is very fine: a careful copy adorns the first page of this article in the October number.

The gravestones of the Shakspere family lie in a row in front of the altar-rails, upon the second step leading to it. His wife's is immediately beneath his tomb. It is a flat stone, the surface injured by time, having a small brass plate let in it with an inscription.

Next comes that placed over the body of the poet, with the following inscription:—

GOOD FREND, FOR IESVS SAKE FORBEARE
TO DIGG THY DUST EXCLOASED HEARE:
BLESE BE YE MAN YT SPAKES THES STONES,
AND CVERST BR HE YT MOVES MY BONES.

Next to that of Shakspere lies a stone commemorating the resting-place of Thomas Nash, who married the only daughter of the poet's daughter Susanna: this lady afterwards married Sir John Barnard, and died at Abington, near Northampton, in 1670, in whom the direct line of the poet's issue ceased. Dr. John Hall, her father, lies next; and last comes Susanna, his wife.

Such are the relics, genuine and supposititious, and the localities which connect themselves with the history of "the world's poet" at Stratford. In this world of change and fancied improvement, such records may be useful, particularly when they are connected with one who has most honored his native land by his writings, and of whom Englishmen have most reason to be proud.

"Triumph, my Britain! thou hast one to show,
To whom all scenes of Europa homage owe.
He was not of an age, but for all time;
And all the Muses still were in their prime,
When, like Apollo, he came forth to warm
Our ears, or like a Mercury to churm.
Nature herself was proud of his designs,
And joy'd to wear the dressing of his lines."
B. Jonson.